

Assertiveness

Assumptions that affect
relationships



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Assertiveness

- ◆ This list is not complete, but includes some common operating assumptions.
- ◆ Take a look at the section on assertiveness in The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Davis, Eshelman and McKay for more information about assumptions and assertiveness.



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What's the first assumption?

- “You should never put your needs first. It’s selfish”.
- What do you think about that?
- If you think it is selfish, do you think it’s okay to be selfish?
- Think about if you may have a right to put yourself first sometimes.



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What else?

- ➔ “Your feelings need to make sense to other people. If they don’t, you must be wrong or crazy”.
- ➔ Okay, what do you think?
- ➔ People may often say this, but is it true?
- ➔ We think you have a right to be the final judge of your feelings and to accept them as simply what you feel.
- ➔ Do you agree?



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Yeah. What other ones?

- ◆ “You should respect others’ views, especially those in charge. Keep your opinions to yourself”.
- ◆ It is sometimes useful to think about who benefits by having you believe this. It may be in someone else’s interest, but what about you?
- ◆ We think you have a right to have your own opinions and convictions.



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***I never thought about
all these! What else?***

- “You should always try to be logical and consistent”.
- Yes? No?
- Are there times when this would not be necessary?
- Do you think you have a right to change your mind or decide on a different course of action?



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... guess so.

- “You should be flexible and adjust”.
- While we aren’t recommending you be inflexible and rigid, must you always adjust?
- Do other people always have good reasons for what they do?



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I can see how these ideas would create problems...

- “You should never interrupt. Asking questions shows you’re stupid.”
- We think you have a right to interrupt in order to better understand what someone is trying to communicate.



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***Some of these are
obviously wrong, but
others I'm hooked by***

- ◆ “You shouldn’t take up others’ valuable time with your problems”.
- ◆ You have a right to *ask* for help or emotional support.
- ◆ Notice we said “ask” not “expect” or “demand”.
- ◆ If you have the right to set limits, so do other people.



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***It's hard sometimes
when I feel really
needy***

- “People don’t want to hear that your feel bad, so keep it to yourself”.
- You have a right to feel and express pain. You can learn ways to do this more effectively so that people can hear you.
- Can you think of any other assumptions that might keep you stuck?



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***“You should take
people’s advice very
seriously”***

- Good one.
- You may actually have a right to ignore the advice of others.
- What do you think?



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***Yeah. What about
“it’s wrong to blow
your own horn”?***

- ➔ So you’re thinking maybe you don’t always have to be modest.
- ➔ We think you have a right to receive formal recognition for your work and achievements.



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***That's a hard one
for me.***

- What about this one: "You should always try to accommodate others. If you don't they won't be there when you need them."
- We think you have a right to say "no".



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***But that might
be true!***

- You're right, it could be true with some people. But what if it's not true of everyone?
- How about this one: "Don't be antisocial. People will think you don't like them."
- You have a right to be alone, even if others would prefer your company.



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***That never occurred
to me.***

- “You should always have a good reason for what you feel and do”.
- You have a right to not have to justify yourself to others.
- This does not mean that you won’t at times suffer consequences if you make decisions for no good reason.



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***Got one: “When someone
is in trouble, you
should help them”***

- ◆ Yeah.
- ◆ We think that, while it’s good to help others, it is not your job or responsibility to take care of their problems for them.



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What about mindreading?

- You mean something like “you should know what other people need and want, even when they don’t tell you”?
- We think you have a right not to anticipate others’ needs and wishes.



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Yeah.

- How about “If someone asks you a question you should answer it”?
- Versus you have a right to choose not to respond to a situation.



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Can these apply to everyone?

- ◆ Sure.
- ◆ In thinking about these assumptions you might come up with a list of your legitimate rights.
- ◆ If you have rights, remember that others have these same rights and that rights come with responsibilities.



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